

Twenty Characteristics of Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children

- 1) The children engaged in the sexual behaviors do **not** have an ongoing mutual play relationship (i.e. strangers, just met, infrequently play together).
- 2) Sexual behaviors are engaged in by children of different ages or developmental levels (in general, the wider the age difference the greater the concern).
- 3) Sexual behaviors are out of balance with other aspects of the child's life/interests.
- 4) Children who have too much knowledge about sexuality or behave in ways consistent with adult sexual expression.
- 5) Sexual behaviors are significantly different than those of other same-age children.
- 6) Sexual behaviors continue in spite of consistent and clear requests to stop.
- 7) Children appear unable to stop themselves from engaging in sexual activities.
- 8) The sexual behaviors elicit complaints from other children and/or adversely affect other children.
- 9) Children's behaviors are directed at adults who feel uncomfortable receiving them.
- 10) Children (older than 4) do **not** understand personal boundaries of themselves or others.
- 11) Sexual behaviors progress in frequency, intensity or intrusiveness over time.
- 12) Fear, anxiety, shame or guilt is associated with the sexual behavior.
- 13) Children engage in extensive, persistent mutually agreed upon adult-type sexual behaviors with other children (using sex as a way to feel less lonely or abandoned).
- 14) Children manually stimulate or have oral/genital contact with animals.
- 15) Children sexualize nonsexual things (sees everyday objects as sexual).
- 16) Sexual behaviors cause physical or emotional pain/discomfort to self or others.
- 17) Children use sex to hurt others.
- 18) Verbal and/or physical expressions of anger precede, follow or accompany the sexual behavior.
- 19) Children use distorted logic to justify their sexual actions (disregards or deny responsibility).
- 20) Coercion, force, bribery, manipulation or threats are associated with sexual behaviors.